

The Transition to Adulthood (T2A) Alliance submission to the MOPAC consultation on the draft policing and crime plan

The Transition to Adulthood (T2A) Alliance welcomes the opportunity to respond to the MOPAC consultation on the draft policing and crime plan. The T2A programme produces and promotes evidence for effective ways of working with young adults who commit crime. T2A's principal aim is that the young adults (who T2A define as those aged 18-25) are subject to a distinct approach at all stages of the criminal justice system, including custody. T2A's evidence base is founded on three main bodies of research: Criminology, Neurology and Psychology. All three fields strongly support the T2A view that young adults are a distinct group with needs that are different both from children under 18 and adults older than 25, underpinned by the unique developmental maturation process that takes place in this age group.

T2A's strategy and work is steered by the T2A Alliance, a coalition of 14 leading justice youth and health organisations, chaired by Joyce Moseley OBE and convened by the Barrow Cadbury Trust. Since its establishment in 2008, T2A has contributed to significant change in policy and practice locally, nationally and internationally. T2A has produced more than 40 reports and undertaken 12 projects across England demonstrating effective interventions for young adults. The framework for T2A's work is the "T2A Pathway", which identifies 10 points in the criminal justice system where a distinct approach to young adults can be delivered, from point of arrest and including prosecution, sentencing, probation and custody.

1. To what extent do you agree that the plan will make London a safer city for all?

We agree that the strategy and priorities outlined in the draft plan have the potential to reduce the risk of young adults becoming both victims and / or perpetrators of offending behaviour.

2. Do you think the priorities stated by the Mayor are the right ones? Thinking about the priorities - please provide any comments you have about the plan itself including anything you would add or change.

T2A welcomes the recognition in the draft plan of the distinct needs of young adults, and the commitment to "work with partners to deliver a specific approach for young adults across all criminal justice agencies, focused on integrating services to minimise the need for young adults to transition from youth to adult services." There is now compelling evidence for a distinct approach to young adults in the justice system, based on a growing body of scientific research which shows that the process of maturation occurs well into the mid-20s, and that this period overlaps with the peak age of offending and the onset of desistance. Young adults (18-25 year olds) represent just 9% of the UK population, yet account for a third of those sent to prison each year, a third of the probation service's caseload, and a third of the total economic and social costs of crime. More than half of all young adults who finish a custodial or community sentence are reconvicted within a year. Nevertheless, young adults are also the most likely age group to 'grow out of crime', and young people who commit crime typically stop doing so by their mid-20s. A positive intervention at this stage can get a young adult offender back on the right track and turn them into law-abiding members of society.

T2A would be pleased to work with MOPAC as it seeks to develop a specific approach to young adults through its "Gripping the Offender" initiative. The T2A Alliance report, [Pathways from Crime](#), identifies ten points in the criminal justice process where a more

rigorous and effective approach for young adults and young people in the transition to adulthood can be delivered (see appendix one). Many of these areas, such as policing, are ones over which the Mayor has direct oversight, or are areas in which he can play an important role in bringing together different local agencies to help ensure a more coordinated approach. T2A, in partnership with the Revolving Doors Agency, has produced a briefing for PCCs, [Why Prioritise Young Adults?](#), which reflects many of the principles and priorities outlined in the draft plan. Its main recommendations to PPCs are:

- Support common-sense policing of young adults. Commission services that give police more community based options, and support restorative solutions for young adults.
- Work with partners to support diversion where appropriate. Link with health and social care agencies to ensure effective diversion, and to tackle the multiple problems of many prolific young adult offenders.
- Take a lead in tackling young adult reoffending locally. Ensure local partners work together to ensure a smooth transition between youth and adult criminal justice services in order to reduce reoffending, and support a distinct local strategy targeting what works for young adults.
- Engage with young adults. Consult young adults as part of duty to engage with victims. Work to improve relationships between young adults and the police.

T2A particularly welcomes the following commitments made in the draft plan, which are in line with the recommendations of the T2A pathway and its recommendations to PCCs:

- Roll out victim-centred restorative justice provision for London.
- Work with the MPS and local authorities to reduce the arrest and charge rates of looked-after children.
- With London partners, seek to review custodial and community provision for children and young people to break the cycle of offending.

Alongside rehabilitative work, we welcome the recognition in the draft plan that “better career prospects are essential if young people are to look to a more positive future and make lasting change” and the commitment that the “Mayoralty will work with London employers to improve the pathways into apprenticeships and jobs, which will support MOPAC’s work in this area.” In the longer term, we share the view expressed in the draft plan that “Devolving budgets and commissioning responsibilities would allow London to focus on prevention, improve the support for young people on community sentences, reducing their reoffending and develop a better model for youth custody bringing young Londoners closer to their homes to benefit from rehabilitative services.” T2A would be pleased to work with MOPAC as it develops a case for the devolution of greater powers over the criminal justice service to London.

Given the disproportionate number of young people who are impacted by serious and violent crime as both victims and offenders, we understand the priority given in the draft plan to tackling the problems of knife crime, gangs and violence. We welcome the recognition that the causes of serious offending by young people are “deep rooted and complex”, and that an effective strategy will require a multi-faceted approach combining different measures of “prevention, intervention and enforcement”. We agree that prevention is key to protecting young people and reducing crime over the long-term. We welcome the proposals outlined in the draft plan for greater cooperation between the police, health and welfare services, and the adoption of approaches which take account of the risks factors for young people caught up in violence – including sexual abuse, mental health needs and exploitation.

In addition, addressing the problem of confidence in policing among young adults, particularly those from BAME communities, will be vital to achieving the aims outlined in the draft plan. As the impact assessment highlights, “The level of confidence in the police among

young BAME Londoners is 11% lower than that of young white Londoners. Three quarters of white Londoners feel they will be treated fairly by police. Only two thirds of black Londoners feel the same way. Similarly, only 54% of black people feel stop and search is used fairly, compared to 78% of white people.” As outlined below, we would like to see the adoption of a performance measure to improve confidence in policing.

- 3. Are the delivery plans and commitments clear and easy to understand? Please provide any comments you have about the delivery plans and commitments. Is there anything you would like to contribute regarding the approach MOPAC intend to take?**

As the draft plan recognises, many of the commitments are not in the direct gift of the Mayor, and will require close cooperation and coordination between different agencies located at the national and London level. In the longer term, effective delivery will require the achievement of a comprehensive devolution settlement which places clear responsibility and accountability for outcomes with MOPAC. T2A has experience of working with PCCs and probation services across England and Wales, including in metropolitan areas such as London and Greater Manchester, in developing, and advising on the implementation and delivery of, young adult specific approaches. We would be pleased to work with MOPAC as it seeks to take forward its proposals on young adults.

- 4. Do you agree with the approach laid out in terms of how success of the plan will be measured? Please provide any comment you have about performance measurement of the police or criminal justice service.**

Given the recognition in the impact assessment of the low levels of confidence young adults have in the police, especially those from BAME communities, and the emphasis placed in the draft plan on the importance of building public confidence in policing, it is surprising that no explicit performance measure on confidence is included in the draft plan. We would like to see the adoption of a commitment and performance measure to improve the confidence of young adults in policing. We would also like to see the adoption of a commitment to reduce the disproportionate number of young black and Muslim men entering the criminal justice system.

Appendix One - T2A Pathway Recommendations

Policing and arrest

The police should receive specific training for managing contact with young adults, particularly in relation to stop and search and, where possible, should seek to divert young adults into appropriate services away from the criminal justice process.

Diversion

Drug, alcohol and mental health services should support young adults in the criminal justice process and have arrangements in place for managing the transition between child and adult services. Appropriate young adult diversion services should be commissioned via the Police and Crime Commissioners

Restorative Justice

Restorative justice should be considered for all young adult offenders at all stages of the criminal justice process, including pre-arrests, pre-sentence, and as part of a sentence.

Prosecution

As part of the decision-making process on arrest, charge and prosecution, the police and the Crown Prosecution Service should consider the ‘lack of maturity’ of a young offender, alongside current considerations of ‘youthfulness’ among the factors tending against

prosecution, in line with similar considerations by probation and sentencers later in the process.

Sentencing

More should be done centrally and locally to develop the approach to identifying and responding to varying developmental maturity of young adults in the criminal justice process. Criminal justice professionals should support the sentencing process by ensuring that lack of maturity is identified. Pre-sentence reports by the probation service should consider the maturity of all young adult offenders, and clearly recommend and advocate to the court an effective response and, where appropriate, a robust community-based intervention.

Community sentences

The few existing examples of young adult specific community interventions that exist cross the country should be replicated nationally, and similar effective interventions should be available to all sentencers when sentencing a young adult. More should be done to develop the scope of the Attendance Centre requirement as well as tailoring other available community sentence options to the specific needs of young adults.

Managing the transfer process

All Youth Offending Services and Probation Trusts should develop arrangements to manage the transfer process to ensure that young adults receive the support they need to comply with their sentence or licence.

Custody

Lessons should be learned by the young adult YOI estate from the reduction in numbers of children in custody, which has enabled some degree of justice reinvestment from acute services to prevention. Every effort should be made to keep non-violent young adults out of custody, particularly remand, and enable the courts to issue an intensive community sentence. Specific attention should be given to young adult women who require a distinct approach, and to the over-representation of black and ethnic minority young adult prisoners.

Resettlement

All prisons should have resettlement plans in place for every young adult at least three months prior to their release and a 'through the gate' service should be provided to every young adult in custody.

Enabling desistance from crime

A young adult specific approach (with a focus on securing stable accommodation and long-term employment) should be implemented throughout criminal justice service design, commissioning and delivery to ensure that young adults coming out of the criminal justice process are supported to stop offending.

For further information, contact:

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